



FACTS CONCERNING VACCINATION

FOR

HEADS OF FAMILIES.

[Revised by the Local Government Board, and issued with their sanction.]

Vaccination and Small Pox.

NOTE.—You can be Vaccinated Free of Charge
by the Public Vaccinator of your District,

Mr. _____

at _____

Should Small Pox break out at your house or
among your neighbours, see at once to the
Vaccination of the household, and to the Re-
vaccination of all persons over 12 years of
age; and at the same time inform the
Medical Officer of Health for your District,

Dr. _____

Or the Inspector,

Mr. _____

at _____

Any patient suffering from Small Pox should
be removed to Hospital; or, if kept at home,
must have a separate room and nurse.

In view of the prevalence of Small Pox in this neighbourhood, the attention of heads of families is particularly invited to the necessity of at once taking all possible steps for **protection against attacks** by securing the **vaccination or re-vaccination** of every member of their households who is still unprotected. Vaccination and re-vaccination may be had free of expense to the applicant, at the authorised public stations. Under ordinary circumstances re-vaccination should be done as each person reaches the age of 15 ; but there being now immediate danger of Small Pox, all persons over 12 years of age who have not already been re-vaccinated, should have this operation performed without delay.

1. Small Pox in its natural state is one of the most loathsome, disfiguring, and fatal diseases in the world. Not only so, but it is very infectious, and may be caught in a multitude of ways of which most people take no account. The only protection of any avail is **vaccination**, which not only modifies very greatly the severity of an attack, robbing the disease of half its terrors, but, in the great majority of cases, if properly performed and repeated, **wards off an attack for the lifetime**.

2. It is very important that the protection which

vaccination affords against attacks of Small Pox should be properly understood. Efforts are constantly being made by misguided and imperfectly informed persons to make people believe that vaccination is injurious, and that it has no effect whatever in diminishing the fatality of Small Pox, either amongst communities or in individuals.

3. As to the alleged injury from vaccination, all competent authorities are agreed that, with due care in the performance of the operation, **no risk of any injurious effects** from it need be feared. If there be any such risk, it can only be of the most insignificant kind, and against it has to be set the enormous protection against an attack of Small Pox which vaccination affords.

4. It may in isolated cases occasionally happen that undue inflammation or even erysipelas will follow the performance of vaccination, but the same result may follow (and often does) any trifling hurt or abrasion of the skin, such as a sore place or the scratch of a pin. Vaccination confers so great a protection against Small Pox, that no wise parent will hesitate to avail himself of it because of the remote possibility of setting up through it some inflammatory action which any other puncture would have equally sufficed to cause. No one would argue that because a certain number of infants are suffo-

cated every year by bed-clothes, therefore all babies must sleep in the cold. Yet this is quite as rational as to say that vaccination shall not be practised because it may occasionally set up inflammation or erysipelas in children's arms.

5. The fear that a foul disease may be implanted by vaccination is an unfounded one. Such mischief could only happen through the most gross and culpable carelessness on the part of the vaccinator; and as all medical men now receive special training in vaccination, no risk of this kind need be at all apprehended. Of course, vaccination, like everything else, requires a reasonable amount of care in its performance. The alleged injury arising from vaccination is, indeed, disproved by all medical experience.

6. The advantages of vaccination are, on the other hand, great and undoubted. Before its discovery, the mortality from Small Pox in London was forty times greater than it is now. The disease used to rage unchecked, killing a very large proportion of those whom it attacked, and maiming, blinding, and disfiguring those whose lives it spared. The same thing still happens at the present day amongst communities where vaccination is not practised; and it would in all probability happen again in England if vaccina-

tion were to cease. Since vaccination has become compulsory in England, the death-rate from Small Pox has further diminished to one half of what it was in the previous sixteen years, and it would doubtless decrease still more if greater care were taken by individual persons to secure vaccination in their own households.

7. It is the universal experience in every epidemic of Small Pox, that people who are properly vaccinated escape attack to an immensely larger extent than unvaccinated people, whilst if a vaccinated person happens to catch the disease, he has a very much greater chance of recovery than the unvaccinated. In all epidemics, moreover, the unvaccinated are attacked in a proportion altogether beyond their relative number to the vaccinated, who, of course, constitute the great bulk of the population ; and, when such persons are attacked, the number of cases that prove fatal amongst them is very large. Statistics, covering a long series of years at the London Small Pox Hospital, have shown that whereas less than one person died out of every hundred thoroughly vaccinated persons attacked, more than 35 out of every 100 unvaccinated persons attacked succumbed to the disease.

This is no isolated experience, but is constantly receiving confirmation.

8. In the last severe epidemic that attacked London 11,000 vaccinated persons were taken to the Small Pox Hospitals. Very few indeed of these people had been re-vaccinated; but their first vaccination, though often inefficiently performed, sufficed to reduce the death rate among them to less than 9 per cent. But besides these persons, there were 3,759 persons taken to these hospitals who had never been vaccinated; and of these people no less than 44 in every 100 died, or nearly one half of the unvaccinated who had caught the disease. The same thing is observed in every epidemic that occurs.

9. The degree of protection against Small Pox is in direct proportion to the thoroughness of the vaccination, so that it is highly important that the operation should be done as effectually as possible. The best vaccinators make four or more insertions in the arm; and it is well to remember that whereas persons with this number of vaccination marks die when attacked by Small Pox in the proportion of 1 to every 130 cases, those vaccinated less efficiently die in a much greater proportion, so that people with only one bad mark die at the rate of 12 per 100 attacks. The too common practice of being

content with one insertion in the arm is, therefore, to be strongly discountenanced.

10. Partly because of the large amount of indifferent vaccination of the sort just mentioned, which was practised in former years, and partly because even the best infantile vaccination sometimes in process of time loses more or less of its effect, it is important that all persons who have been vaccinated in infancy, should undergo re-vaccination on reaching the age of fifteen. Re-vaccination, once properly and successfully performed, scarcely ever requires repetition. None of the nurses at any of the London Small Pox Hospitals, who have been duly re-vaccinated before entering on their duties, have ever caught Small Pox, though they are necessarily in constant contact with cases of the most malignant type.

11. Our army and navy, the men of which are always re-vaccinated on their admission to the force, have, since the requirement of re-vaccination came into operation, been singularly free from Small Pox; and official experience in England and abroad has shown that soldiers who have been re-vaccinated can live in cities intensely affected by Small Pox without themselves suffering to any appreciable degree from the disease. Experience

of the same sort is afforded by the Postal Service in London. During the ten years, 1870—79, among some ten thousand persons permanently employed in this service, all of whom had undergone re-vaccination, not a single fatal case of Small Pox is known to have occurred, and only ten non-fatal attacks, all of which were of a very slight character.

12. From these facts it appears certain that vaccination affords a protection of the highest value and efficacy against a most loathsome and terrible disease; and that it is consequently of the greatest importance to secure its universal performance. It is, therefore, suggested as a wise precaution that not only should every unvaccinated person be protected without a day's delay, but all vaccinated persons over 12 years of age should, at the present time, at once be taken to the public vaccinator, or the private medical attendant, in order that any further risk of attack by Small Pox may be effectually guarded against.

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